



SOUND AND FURY

2012 • Vol 3

Avila University • Kansas City



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2016

<https://archive.org/details/soundfury03stud>



SOUND AND FURY

A Literary Journal for
Avila University

THE 2012 LITERARY AWARDS

YOHEI ISHIHAMA Winner of the Nancy Cervetti Essay Award

KATRINA HIGH Winner of the Burton Playwriting Award

Editorial Staff

Editor-in-Chief	Michelle Henderson
Assistant Editor	Marcus Henderson
Staff	Jason Vizcaino Miranda Duston Pebbles McKinzy
Advisor	Stanley E. Banks Assistant Professor/Artist-in-Residence
Illustrator, Cover Page	Marcus Henderson
Layout Designer	Debbie Seigler

From the Editor

Dear Friends:

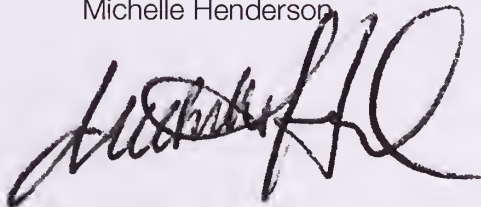
Art is the purest form of perfect imperfection. Only a mind can truly express what the eye captures. Only the ears can hear the true sound of emotion. Let this book of shared pride, spirit, and self devotion take you to a place that only your feelings can take you. Take this book and let it speak to you from front to back however you please. Expression is the work of first impression. Free your thoughts and sink in.

We would like to give our warmest thanks to everyone who submitted their work. Clearly, everyone worked very hard, but we could not accept all of the work this year. It was a pleasure to have had the opportunity to read the beautiful differences from all of you.

Please do not stop writing. We encourage you to keep submitting. Keep dreaming and reaching for your dreams. We are all dreamers and great achievers. Without you, there would be no reason for Sound and Fury!

Thank you to all the staff of Sound and Fury!!! It has been an extraordinary and dramatic experience!!!

Sincerely Yours,
Michelle Henderson

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michelle Henderson', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Sound and Fury Editor-in-Chief

Table of Contents

Awards
Editorial Staff
From the Editor

Poetry

For Quill Tip and its Flock.....	3
Jewelry Left for Dead	4
Cherry Cream Covered Emerald Plum Cadaver.....	5
Curly Knees	6
Waterfall by the Garden.....	7
Detour to Albuquerque.....	8
Bodhisattva	9
She Who Calms the Storm	10
Peace of Mind	11
A Boy with a Crooked Heart	12
Depraved Lament	15
A Respiratory Therapists' Ode To Becca.....	17

Fiction

SMILE JUST A LITTLE SMILE FOR UZAMAKI.....	21
Untitled	22
The Doll Faced Girl	26
A Fairy's Tale.....	28
Janope the Plain	34

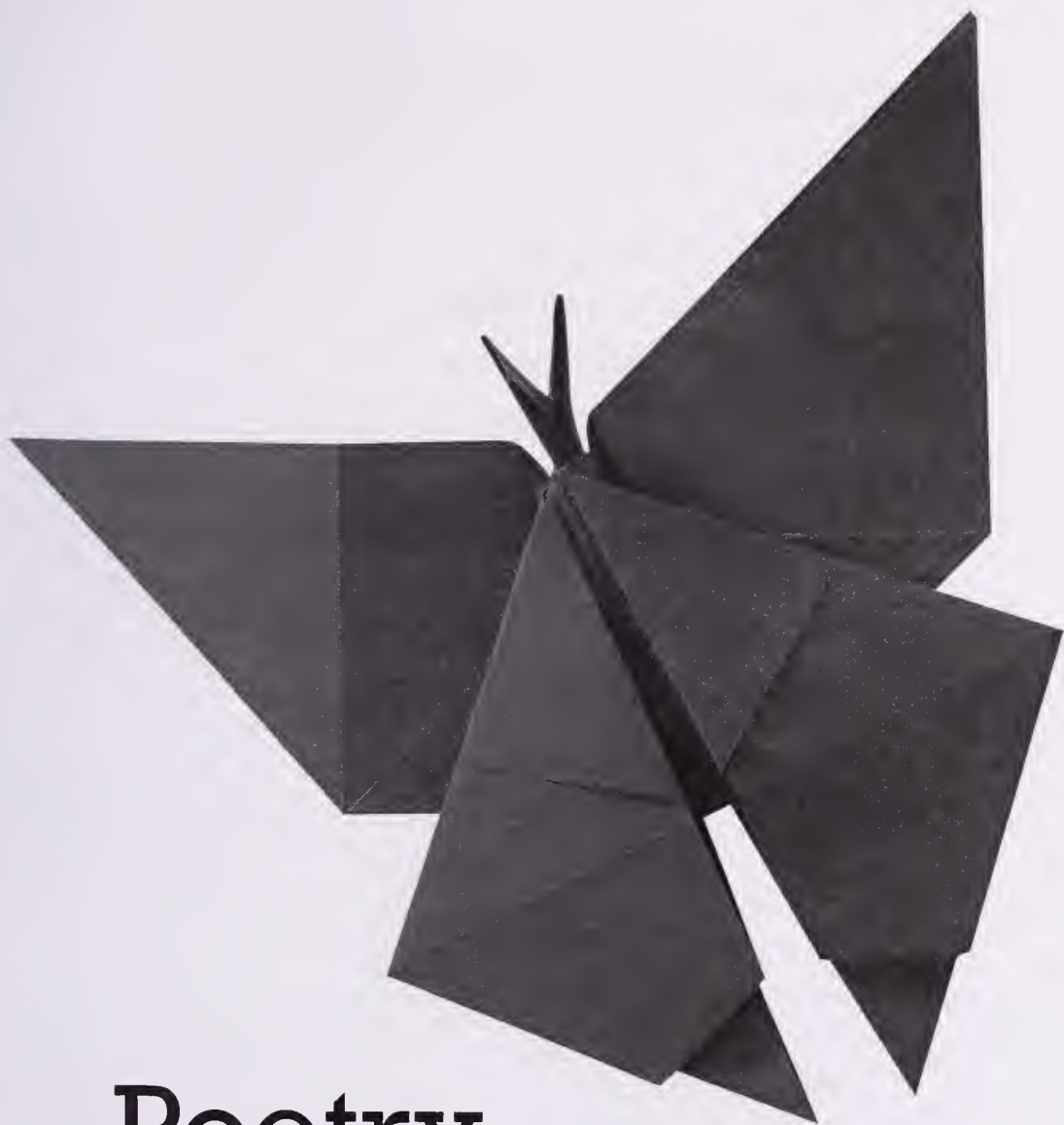
Essays

Tsunami	41
They Are All Boys.....	44
Freedom Through Words	46
Rethinking the Foreign Aid Model: From Tents to the Marketplace	48
Mama Leone, A Portrait.....	54
Between the Moon and the Sea: The Struggle for Defining Self in <i>Bless Me, Ultima</i>	56

Play

An Issue of Vanity.....	63
-------------------------	----

Index



Poetry

“For Quill Tip and its Flock”

Ashes flutter like
Flapping butterflies
Saddening the warmth.
Broach the seething tears,
Calling a valve's heart.
Embolden course in
Whimpering solace.

Jewelry Left for Dead

Lava-choked throat with roasted haze
Destabilized and trembled my palace,
Powdered the walls like dashes of pepper,
Sickened and leaned pink fillets of my brain.

A typhoon soon came to rinse it away

Like a python swallowed

half my sand castle,

nipped my spine

Sub-zeroed the Valentine

between my frozen back and chest.

Earthquake slashed my rocks

chugged the fluid

Like Petron on a faulted cocktail glass,

Dehydrated my cells

Vacated my senses.

Alone on my side nosed down on mud

Rolled over, no arid shame shown alive.

Paced the fairy tale dynasty I had,

Diamond cut orchids, golden haired

chrysanthemums survived.

Cherry Cream Covered Emerald Plum Cadaver

Bamboozled is how I materialized
Waking up in a mysterious hole
Psychiatric ward with zephyr round walls.
I'm stuck in thick brunette carpet forlorned,
Hostage while a colossal vertebrate
Jabbed tacks to lacerate and hemorrhage me
Stray jackets to nurture, sedate, and aid
Kidnapped once again by a tall stranger
Thrown in compost expunging silhouette
There's no clone for carcass in scarlet nose.

Curly Knees

Indonesia collapsed on unswept floors
With pinnacle crowns of fresh sea salt
Assorted rhombus crispy bread crumbs
Pulverized unknown morsels,
Dissolving the hollowed membrane cavity
Blistering like a new baked spicy crater.

Indonesia flaunted those pencil bones
Evaporating like acid on flesh
From the moist saline and bacteria.

Indonesia pleaded for deep mercy
To be unshackled from schizophrenic
Fondness of unsuitable haughty souls.

Indonesia let itself expire too
Soon to foretaste the balmy affection
Of a bona fide organism.
Forgot they're not lactose
Intolerant of paralleled duo toes
That prove they are not kamikazès.

Waterfall by the Garden

Ruby, pearl, sapphire, tigers-eye gemstones

Radiating from the vodka water

Emitting rays of melancholy tints

Drunkened the bitter melons on the soil.

Okras and eggplants growing together,

Conceal the sun coloring it purple

Droplets of cobalt ghost back to the stream.

Tomatoes and squash mud sliding sideways,

Pressure rims of the feverish lagoon

Embanking goldfish, guppies and tetras

Dyed the dirt to camouflage a tree frog.

Detour to Albuquerque

I sniffed a fruit bouquet of prickly pears
From the eighteen carat valleys of sand
Glimmering turquoise stones hanging from lobes
Of sterling silver made by Navajos
Avocado trees for guacamoles
Ripening the leather from green to olive
Chilled mango salsa on blue tortillas
In clay potteries with Kokopellis
Pink Saguaro pop rocks with scorpions
Route sixty-six shaped machete hand soaps
Taken where my throat was slit.

Bodhisattva

She holds in her small soft hands
A strand of sinew the length of a swollen heart.
These hands, porcelain and glass,
Stretching and twisting a human stain
Into a Möbius strip.

I am vulnerable, dismantled and on display
In a zoological garden in a dimension I cannot comprehend.
I am the last of my species and I am dissected.
Only a remaining strand of sinew the length of my swollen heart
Wrap around her small and soft hands, porcelain and glass.

She Who Calms the Storm

The water is filling up the room
Pushing me around like the bully I could never stand up to
It surrounds me
I am forced upward
Towards the ceiling
Nothing looks the same now
My eyes can only detect misshapen objects that were once familiar
I am starting to lose air
I can't hold my breath for much longer
I can taste the briny bitter water as it reaches my mouth
I bid the world goodbye as I inhale what precious air is left

Then you come along
Swimming up and taking my hands in yours
Torrential panic clears to blue skies
A golden ray of light, a halo, surrounds you
With simple ideas you drain my flooded mind
Then you begin your uncanny magic
With your sparkling eyes
Never breaking contact with mine
They are green pools with mystical yellow light
surrounding the black lily pads in their centers
You simply reach down to the bottom of this submerged world I live in
And pull that obvious little plug
Gravity sets us softly on the ground
Now we stand in this soaked room
Our eyes do not break
Small droplets of everything that once raged war on my mind
Slink in streams to the drain in their defeat
We stand together now
You and I

Peace of Mind

These words I write come from my head, my mind.
As though my thoughts could bend space and time.
Thoughts a plenty, many, and several
Help to reduce my body's cortisol level.
As I express and write such force and compassion
I put myself at ease, an exergonic reaction.
These words and emotions leave from I, myself, and me
Resulting in a decrease in my overall entropy.
My surroundings are more chaotic, you will find.
But at least, for now, I have found some peace of mind.

A Boy with a Crooked Heart

Filled with fright day and night
until he cries himself to sleep.
Always alone in that awful home
Where fed nothing to eat.

Cut deep inside he cannot hide
From his broken pride
He doesn't understand why he was put on this land
If he always has to hide.

Nothing but an "It," he must admit
Cause that's what that woman says.
She feeds on his fear while holding a beer
And tries to beat him to shreds.

He still survives but yet he strives
For a new, better life to start.
Not in control of his very own soul
He's a boy with a crooked heart.

He does every chore, tries to be adored
But only gets slapped in the face.
He tries to run to see the sun
But she always wins the race.

He sleeps on the floor behind that cellar door
Under nothing but a sheet.
Praying to him to forgive whatever sin
Causes him to get beat.

Down those steps in the darkest depths
Is a boy who suffers in fear.
He's overthrown, he stands alone

No one will get near.

His stomach hurts underneath that shirt
From food he has never gotten.
Eternally numb from what has been done,
Knowing he has been forgotten.

He tries to escape, but he's about to break
The terror rips him apart.
Again he cries, he runs and hides,
He's a boy with a crooked heart.

He wishes for relief from the horrible grief
He has year after year.
He doesn't make a sound, yet he screams aloud,
But nobody seems to hear.

He tries to hide until his tears subside
From running down his pale weakened face.
She grows stronger, she hits longer,
He wants to get out of this place.
He wants to run away, he cannot stay

In this scary indescribable nightmare.

Elliot 2

That woman's strong, what she does is wrong.
He knows his life's unfair

She once over powers, his life is devoured
He's released from this twisted game
He no longer hates, he has met his fate
He no longer lives life in vain

He saw the light that chilly night
And he smiled with joyful glee

His wish has come true and all he's been through
is over, now he is free

Now in heaven he'll stand away from the land
Where he was the target for her darts
He has been blessed, taken from the mess
He was a boy with a crooked heart.

Depraved Lament

Along the road I often went
Assuming both held the same intent
Not knowing the road was bent
Amazingly I indulged in a fantasy of you
Scary how I perceived a different view
But puttered along after your stint
You never regained your charming scent
My tears were met with mighty surprise
You being unable to see
The source of my demise
After many fruitless efforts
After many desperate attempts
Reconciliation seemed to display
A nasty limp
The continual blowing of your smoke
Caused the unity of us to choke
In you I found a nasty black path
A futile pattern of abnormal consent
My distaste at it all, fueled my unheard lament
My tears became spears
My heart grew bars
Not again would you leave
Another scar
I sleep well into the night
Thankful I don't have to

Roll over in your sight
Don't look back
Don't regret
I have not experienced
The best of life yet

A Respiratory Therapists' Ode To Becca

She danced her way in
So frail and thin,
But all it would take
For this sweetheart to make
Friends with us all
Was one beautiful smile
That never left her all the while.

Though she was hurting inside
She had humility and pride
To never be cross
To any one of us.

She was graceful and polite
All during her fight.

With faith and her fears

Was wise beyond her years
And she gave it her all
With grace she would fall.



Fiction

SMILE JUST A LITTLE SMILE FOR UZAMAKI

All he could hear was the train outside his window. He thought how funny it was, that sound reminding him of life other than his own. Laying in the darkness about to set adrift as soon as both eyes are closed.

Bang bang bang, get up Nick! It was Amanda calling for me again. Her pain always in threes, the only way I could ever hear her voice. I wince in the sheets as one eye opens. A tear must have dried over my lashes as I could only see a bottle of vodka on account of the blurriness. She calls me to life like a crow chipping away my tombstone. Rolling off the bed planting both feet, my car keys are felt under the crush of my second step, bringing me to my knee on account of the weight I applied on it. The little things that happened to me, it's funny how big they are. I open the door, immediately the air hugs me.

Hi Nick, it's my neighbor Monica. The slightest squeak from our shared balcony is like a knock on her door. Since Amanda's fate, she has enacted a vulture flying around the colors of hue.

"Haven't seen you for awhile," said Monica.

I could speak, but that would give way to dusk in my heart, unhinging my stability. Body language is my form of communication as my back is all I care to indulge as far as a response goes.

Entering my car the ignition starts the reaper. We can be like they are it says, laaa la la laaa la, blending in the cowbell. You can never have too much cowbell, my cheeks raise from the humorous thought. Odd how the blaring sound goes unnoticed by passers in the parking lot. It's as if I'm halfway there, moments from holding Amanda's hand.

The ashtray holds my previous butt. I light it, inhaling only to exhale with my head trying to lay on my right shoulder. The smoke flowing to my glove box. I think to myself,

Funny the little things.

Untitled

The packed courtroom hushes in an almost simultaneous wave as an elderly judge swiftly bangs his gavel for silence.

"In the matter of Julio Vargas vs. the state Of New Mexico, the jury hereby finds Mr. Vargas guilty of all charges, including racketeering, counterfeiting, and murder," said the judge nonchalantly, as the air escaped the lungs quite audibly from some of the court's attendees. Angry patrons of the accused shouted futile protests and waved their arms as two bailiffs escorted an infuriated and disbelieving man out of the courthouse and into an officer's vehicle.

Less than twelve hours prior, in the darkness of the early morning hours, a slippery thief by the name of Harry Goldstein prowls the extravagantly wealthy neighborhood of Bushmore Hills, like a wily tiger on the hunt for deer hiding in the vast jungles of Asia. He cruises slowly, silently ambling down the streets, looking for a prime target. Harry ashes his cigarette and slows down to a halt when he sees a three-story villa, with the lights off inside. There are no cars in the driveway, and no one appears to be home. Harry switches the car off, pulls down a black ski mask and steps out of the car.

"Here we go Harry," he chuckles to himself. "This should be a great steal." He sneaks around towards the rear of the home, sticking to the shadows and making ghostlike movements with each step. After reaching a back door, he takes out a multi-tool and starts picking the lock. He picks and picks until finally, after several attempts, manages to open the door. Immediately, a high-shrilled alarm begins ringing.

"Fuck!" Harry angrily whispers. He sees a wooden lock box on top of a glass table and grabs it before ducking out of the house and to his car. After fumbling with the keys, he throws the vehicle into drive and speeds off, sirens following him for several heart-pounding seconds. Harry pulls his mask off and lights up a cigarette.

"That was close," he murmured. He hadn't even opened the box yet; he liked surprising himself by waiting until he got to his apartment to see what he had stolen. He was about five minutes from his home when the car exploded into a mass of twisted, burning metal and hideous flames that incinerated everything within reach of them.

"Yeah, Ramon. You do that." Julio Vargas curtly hangs up the phone in his penthouse and rejoins a rough group of men all sitting down to a card game. After lighting up a cigar, Julio takes the cards and begins shuffling them.

"I don't think we have anything to fear tomorrow," he boasts. "Our friend Ramon has assured us that prosecuting attorney Bates will be well-taken care of." The group replies with muffled but cunning laughter, and the cards are dealt again.

"Nelson, this is Ramon. We have a problem." Nelson Alvarez, bodyguard and companion of Julio Vargas, listened dumbfounded as Ramon poured the news into a quivering telephone.

"The bomb was stolen! Someone broke into my home last night and took it! The lawyer will speak!" he cried.

"Shit! What do you mean stolen?" queried an angry Nelson, who still could not fully comprehend the crisis.

"I mean stolen!" retorted Ramon. "You must warn Julio! The trial is in hours!"

"I will, I will," replied Nelson. "See you at the courthouse."

Twenty minutes later, Nelson was at Julio's villa, in a rush to relay the news. He found Julio sitting at a small table, sipping tea and smoking a cigarette. He knew Julio's temper, and was not too comfortable telling him that he faced possibly life in prison now that their plot was foiled.

"Ah, Nelson. How are you?" Julio looked up from his paper. He smiled with an odd, friendly countenance.

"Good, Julio. I must tell you something."

"What is it, brother Nelson?"

Nelson leaned over and whispered into Julio's ear, then stepped back with his head down in a forlorn manner. Julio flung his tea cup to the ground, and it shattered into deadly shards of white porcelain.

"The trial is in two hours. Who is responsible for this mess?" Julio asked, rather coolly.

"I-I-I'm sorry, Julio. I do not know who broke into my home, or why they took the box the bomb was in, or—"

"Enough, enough," Julio cut Nelson off abruptly. "I do not blame you, Nelson. How could I? We are brothers." Julio rose to hug Nelson with the kind of embrace that held honor and respect. As Nelson turned his back, Julio drove a blade sharply and with deadly accuracy into Nelson's side. The sudden blow paralyzed Nelson, and he gasped in disbelief as his former companion got behind

his ear and began whispering.

"Ssshhh. Remember Nelson: Brothers." Julio twisted the knife with a sickening jerk, and gently laid Nelson's limp body onto the ground. Julio bent down and closed Nelson's gaping eyelids, forever hiding the fear and shock that once laid in them. He sat back down, sipped a bit of his tea, and then reached for his cellular phone.

"Ramon, come over to my home," Julio said with a perverse smirk. "I have garbage that needs taken out."

Two hours later, Julio Vargas is sitting in a courtroom that couldn't be accurately described as filled to capacity. It was brimming with reporters, officers of the law, angry or saddened family members who wanted nothing but to be able to strangle the accused with their own bare hands. The smirk that resides on Julio's countenance stinks of arrogance and anticipation for the arrival of arguably the best prosecuting attorney in the Southwest. The doors suddenly burst open and Xavier Bates, among a posse of colleagues and a few lucky reporters, strides down towards the bench, closely resembling a proud and victorious gladiator spilling his soul into the mobs of the Coliseum.

"Ah, counselor Bates, please join us," the judge said with a wry smile.

"Better late than never," laughs Xavier. "The prosecution will proceed."

The tension during the arraignment was overwhelming, and several attendees left the courtroom in tears, before being ushered back in by consoling guards and patrons. Julio's lawyer maintained his innocence to best of his ability, but Xavier Bates was apparently in the middle of a very good day. He called on witnesses that had "slipped through the cracks" of the Vargas fingers, and who had been involved in his racketeering and counterfeiting profits. He also called on a witness who claimed that Julio had shot a man in the streets, in broad daylight, and then walked off as if nothing had happened. Xavier was a superb speaker, and only he could have convinced the witnesses to testify against a known criminal. He seemed to be mocking Julio, and Julio's sharp and cold gazes pierced the air as Xavier continued his rally. If only Xavier knew how close he had come to being killed, the poor bastard. Even if someone would have tipped him off he still wouldn't have believed them.

"That's bullshit!" yelled one of Julio's acquaintances in the audience. "Vargas is a good man and he's clean!"

"Order! Order!" the judge roared as he slammed his gavel for what seemed

like an eternity. The courtroom was on the verge of bedlam, and it drug on like a day out in the fields, under the blazing sun and hoeing the tough, barren ground. The jurors, who were bent out of shape themselves from the rigor of argument and the brutal crimes Xavier had played out for them, took nearly six hours to reach a verdict.

"In the matter of Julio Vargas vs. the state of New Mexico, the jury hereby finds Mr. Vargas guilty of all charges, including racketeering, counterfeiting, and murder" read the judge.

Half the courtroom erupted in joyous cheer, while the other half hollered profanities and threats. As Julio was being cuffed by the bailiffs, Xavier exchanged high fives with his team, and stood proud as the television crew mobbed him. When Julio was removed from the courthouse, Xavier stepped out into the street to answer the eager inquiries of the media. Just then, a man wearing a suit and a rubber Mickey Mouse mask approached the ecstatic lawyer and revealed a small revolver. As he passed behind Xavier, he stuck the gun into his back and fired two rounds. The alarmed crowd scattered, and nearby police reached for their weapons as the assailant rounded the corner and dove into a waiting Lincoln. The car sped off, with the police firing vain bullets in the direction of a fleeing angel of death.

The Doll Faced Girl

I never was a person. Not a real person. I mean, I was always a *person*. I was always a *Homo sapien* with a brain developed to the ability of learning abstract reasoning, language, and cognitive skills. I developed self awareness, rational thinking, and judgement. I eat cooked food, wear clothes, and use technology. Still, while I may be a *person*, I am only a person to myself.

I always saw myself as a person--thoughtful, intelligent, analytical, and creative. But the way you see yourself is not the way others see you. Often others think of me as a doll, a mindless plaything they can project an identity onto. I used to be unaware of that, even though children are probably most like dolls. Their parents dress them, style their hair, sign them up for extracurriculars, and host parties with other doll-children. If I had been a *real* person at six, I would never have worn that blue-and-gray floral dress with the square collar plastered in lace.

Subconsciously, maybe I always knew. Maybe that is why I rebelled by refusing to like what others suggested. Movies, music, books: if someone else told me that I would enjoy it, I felt as though I could not. Often I refused to try it altogether.

Regardless of my subconscious knowledge, I was not fully aware that others treated me like a doll until recently. The realization came gradually throughout this year.



One night I had to choose between a movie with a couple of friends, or a club with another handful of friends. I felt obligated to go to the club; even though I had never said I would go, my friend assumed I would. Regardless, I chose the movie. The decision was well rationalized--I was a little sick from drinking molded water and I had to wake at five in the morning to drive to Springfield. What I neglected to mention was that crowds make me uncomfortable and that "club music" makes me cringe. Later, a friend from each group argued about it. One stated that I enjoyed the movie (which was true, although I would not have chosen it), then the other retorted that I would have preferred the club (which was less true). No one asked me or cared to hear my opinion. Each had formed one for me and nothing I could say would change it.

The idea that I am a doll has been re-enforced all semester. One friend tried to bring me along to horror movies (although I despise them passionately), clubs (although I find them unbearable), and shops (although I protested in poverty). If I were his doll, I would be old and dirty with an arm falling off and knots in my hair. Well-loved and toted everywhere, but exhausted. He liked to project emotions onto me. Others would find out how I felt about people and situations through him. Unfortunately, these feelings are almost entirely assumed with an occasional basis in hearsay.

Two of my friends are pretty good about treating me like a person, unless of course they have to compete for my attention. Then they stop being collegiate men and start being kindergarten girls, tugging on a rag doll one calls Janey and the other calls Ella. One thinks I am hyper, giddy, and almost unbearably cheerful. The other sees me as intelligent, kempt, and consistently sharp-witted. Both are somewhat tedious personas to maintain. When the three of us are together, I am generally quiet. I allow them to argue over who I am, what I like, and how they affect me.

These people and events sparked a contemplation that led me to important realizations. I play the part of a doll incredibly well: I put myself together each morning as if Mattel designed me, my passive personality allows others to project an image of me onto me, and my need for universal contentment encourages me to live up to others' visions of me. That said, I am not a doll: I am intelligent, analytical, and self-aware. As a result, I would like to rebel against my "doll-like" nature. If I were to do this, people would have to develop a fondness for me, not just their vision of me.

A Fairy's Tale

Once, when the world was a bit more natural and wild than it is today, there lived in the forest a peculiar individual named Dibbingill Obenseed, but his friends and relations all called him Dibbs. Now Dibbs was a Fae, or what we would call a Fairy (but that word was more of an insult to his people in those times). Fae were a small, elusive folk who lived in secluded areas among the other forest and field people. They had wings, but they were not the sustaining wings of a bird or the delicate things you find on butterflies or insects. Their wings were short, pinkish and only suitable for short stints of fluttering. The Faes' other distinguishing features were their slender build, their feathery hair and their clothing which was made from owl pellets and spun silk from caterpillars.

The Fae in fact often kept herds of caterpillars for their silk, and many made quite a handsome living from it. They catered mainly to the Fae and Gnomes, who usually wore more uncomfortable stuff like shirts of animal parts and undergarments made of burrs. While River Nymphs mainly went about naked, they purchased this silk from time to time when they wanted a nice wedding gift or perhaps a fine pillow for an elderly relative.

The Fae were typically associated with such occupations as the silk, producing clothing, wine, glassware, or as in the case of our man Dibbs, telescopes. Dibbs was the eighth in a long line of telescopesmiths, and he took his work very seriously. Being the only telescopesmith in that area of the countryside, he had solid job security. Unfortunately no one wanted telescopes. Nor had they in any of the previous seven generations of his family.

"If the stars wanted anybody up in thar' business, they wouldn't have made thar' houses so damn far away," barked Old Gnome Brackenbottom in response to Dibbs' sales pitch.

"But the beauty of the heavens is in your very hands with one of my telescopes, my good Gnome," reasoned Dibbs.

"The heavens were made for men when they die. Gnomes' souls go to old womens' gardens where we make their carrots rot and their potatoes turn to poo. And shite on me' left foot if you don't know it well, Mr. Obenseed!"

There was little hope of Dibbs convincing the stern, old Gnome and

he relented, promising him a premium discount if he were to ever change his mind. He returned to his hollow tree, a great, old walnut that his family had lived in time out of mind and where he now lived alone. He put his telescopic things away in their respective cupboards, grabbed up his maple leaf cap, rod and reel, and left to go for a spot of fishing at the stream. It had been a hard, long day of sales pitches. A few people almost seemed interested.

As he walked along a path through the weedy grass, well worn by the deer and rabbits that thrived in those parts, he came across an old troll sitting on a flat stone. He seemed so old that Dibbs figured (rightly so) that he no longer lived under a bridge of his own. Old Trolls were often evicted from their bridges by less old, more fierce Trolls who needed a place to be ornery and yell at goats.

Very young Trolls were actually youthful, spirited creatures, often being the life at parties and great at jokes. But, somehow or another, life always found a way of throwing rough times and disturbing experiences at Trolls, and they inevitably became cynical, reclusive old things with bad tempers. It didn't help that they looked like ferrety apes and smelled of bad milk and piss. Dibbs wasn't any more fond of old Trolls than the next woodland creature, but this one seemed so old and so serious that he almost had a look of nobility in his hard, freakishly ugly face. Dibbs was compelled to acknowledge him.

"Hullo," ventured Dibbs. The Troll remained looking straight ahead.

"I say, Hullo, Old Sir."

Unflinching was the Troll. Dibbs then felt a bit awkward and wanted to leave. He reasoned the noble thing in the Troll's face was just his own fancy, and that this stony being was just like all the other tired, hard Trolls from under the bridges.

"Well, good day..." he said, and with that he turned back down the path. Before he took very many steps, the Troll spoke in a deep, gravelly voice that seemed to pull at Dibbs' very bones.

"Fire and blood are over the hill. Doom comes for Man and Wood Folk alike from the sky and the sea. I have lived too long, as have all things in this wood," said the Troll.

Dibbs froze. Trolls were known for harsh sayings, even obscene profanities, but there was nothing profane or antagonistic in this old Troll's words. What he said seemed to Dibbs to be laced with tragedy and a dark

knowledge, as if he had seen things that Dibbs himself had no capacity to understand. He turned to look at the old Troll, expecting to see him still on the stone. What he saw instead was that the Troll had himself turned into stone, merging with his seat. Trolls turned to stone when they died, this Dibbs knew well. This old creature had departed in his presence, leaving its last, ominous saying with him, Dibbs the Fae. He was dumbstruck by both the words the Troll spoke and his sudden end.

He stood there for a moment, not knowing what to do. In short time, though, his sensibilities returned to him. He collected himself, stood upright, and spoke a few words over the Troll's petrified image.

"May his soul go quickly to the sand pit to which it is destined. May he make many a creature fall in it and find contentment. He was a gloomy fellow, always talking about fire and blood and all manner of nonsense that will surely never happen. I'm sure his friends and relations will miss him dearly," said Dibbs, pleased with how quickly the impromptu eulogy came to him. He tipped his cap to the statue of the Troll, turned, and walked on.

That bit about the Troll speaking nonsense was really to comfort Dibbs himself. The Troll's dying words had in fact shaken him in such a way that he knew he'd think about them if he didn't try in great earnest to think of something else. He found that he was thinking of them just then, so he turned his thoughts with great effort to telescopes. He had many fine telescopes in his great walnut tree. Some of which could take their owner across the land into various other parts of the wood without taking a step. Another one, very expensive, allowed the user to see the moon as if it were a dinner plate right in front of their face. He had made them all with his own small hands. He was a fine telescopsmith, he thought, despite his selling little. He thought this and smiled freely as he walked down the path.

* * * *

When he reached the stream, Dibbs looked for a proper fishing spot. It had to be flat, soft with grass, and have a clean ledge over which he could cast his line surely and far out in the water. His searching had good results and soon he was sitting in the shade of a small oak sapling on a high bank. He readied his line and cast it far into the deeper patch of the stream. The water was so clear he could see straight to the bottom in the shallower bits, showing

glistening, smooth stones and minnows darting around eating little things no eyes could see. He looked on into the shallows quite absent mindedly when he noticed something slightly odd. The easy current of the stream carried a little something different in it. It was faint and barely there, but the more Dibbs looked the more he was certain there was something in the water. It looked like the stream was tainted very slightly. Dibbs noticed that the only thing different was the color. It was a subtly different hue... red.

As he kept looking, he found he could discern the redness better. It was flowing all along the length of the stream that he could see, starting upstream out of view and flowing around the bend downstream a ways. It had to be a bit heavier than water, he reasoned, because it kept together and didn't dilute much. He had long forgotten his fishing line, so leaving it he followed his curiosity upstream along the bank to find from where this redness came.

He kept along the bank, staying in the grass in case there was a hawk around that enjoyed Fae. Still earnestly he kept his eyes locked on the red flow that became thicker and deeper in its redness as he progressed up the stream. His curiosity doubled and redoubled as he carried on, the red flow now a bright crimson ribbon flowing in the stream, so rich and striking that no one could miss it. He now ran along the bank, frustrated by the mystery. The feeling in his bones returned slightly as he went, and he noticed that no birds were singing.

The grass thickened along the bank, making it impossible to see what lay ahead. He pushed and clawed his way through with growing vigor. He was breathing heavily, the stream seemed to course through his very mind, this mystery leaving its red mark on his thoughts. It didn't belong! He was desperate to find the source and to think himself foolish for being so worked up at what must be a very mundane cause for his stress. He hoped to laugh in a moment, so much so that he could've wept as he pushed through the brush.

The grass cleared suddenly and he found himself in an open patch. Directly in front of him was an enormous thing, half on the bank and half in the stream. It was dead, and there was blood everywhere. Dibbs' small, impotent wings trembled as he stood there frozen. He was a few paces from the thing and somehow in that terrified state he mustered the ability to reach out and touch it.

He felt cloth; it was covered in a rough, greenish cloth. The blood

showed against it with great contrast. He had touched it, and nothing had happened, so Dibbs ventured on. He walked around the thing with great trepidation, but a greater wonder at what it could be. There was a long bit in the thing's shape, and then a rounded angle, around which he could not see. He carried on quickly enough, but as he turned the corner of the thing his heart dipped into his stomach.

The thing had a face; smooth, pale skin smeared with blood, fair hair matted and wet. It was a man. It was a man like his father and grandfather had told him stories about. This realization shook him. It shook him more than he thought he could be shaken. It rattled his bones like the Troll had, and his head filled with words and images. "Fire! Doom! *Blood!* Blood that filled the stream and tainted it red – the redness of death!"

Coming slightly out of his hysteria, he now looked across the face and around the body. His eyes travelled from the brow to the cheek, down the jaw line and then the neck. There he saw the most peculiar thing. Around the man's neck was a thin metal necklace of tiny silvery beads. On the necklace were two thin metal slabs. They were on the ground by the man's chin. Dibbs noticed they had writing on them and he stepped closer to read them. He could read them, though he understood not what they meant.

SHTEINER, CHRISTOPH V .
44012407T4344 B
LUFTWAFFE, DEUTCHLAND

Dibbs sank onto the ground, heaving breaths coming on as he tried to wrap his head around it all. He couldn't; however, his heart raced and his hands shook. His senses slipped from what he was looking and into a flurry of lights and shadows, rushing sounds, and the feeling of immense heat. He fell fully on the ground, limp as the body beside him.

Fae were rumored to be able to have visions, to see the future and the distant past. Modern Woodfolk were too practical to believe in such things. But here Dibbs was, whirling in a mystical scene he could not understand. All he knew was horror, pain, shock and terrible awe as he saw fire, blood, stones and mud all flying through the air. Men – men by the thousands either lay dying bloody or charging and killing. Great metal things rolled and churned the

bodies or flew overhead showering lightning and death. He saw what he knew to be Men, and what he figured to be female Men and young children, corralled into cars and taken to miserable places in sharp fences where they were worked to death. All of this became a rushing torrent of such terror and sorrow that Dibbs felt suffocated and burned. He was choking on all he was seeing and then knew only blackness.

He awoke where he had fallen, beneath the shadow of the slain man. The sky was now black, and the surroundings bathed in the quiet blue light of the thin moon. Dibbs breathed out slowly. The knowledge weighed on him unbearably. The world, of Man in his bustling cities and of the small and wild Woodfolk, so untouched and clean, would know tragedy and pain like had never been known before. He knew both worlds would never be the same.

Janope the Plain

There was nearly nothing extraordinary about Janope Scott. In fact, there was so little extraordinary about Janope that she often wondered if she deserved the name that she clearly could not give credence towards. But the extraordinary thing about terribly ordinary people like Janope is the sheer magnificence of their simplicity.

On the corner of 23rd and Ellington sits a small coffee shop known professionally as “Hazel and Gretel” and known locally as “The Hipster House.” Hazel and Gretel houses eight small rectangular tables, twenty-one haphazardly chosen chairs, and one wooden bookshelf. This bookshelf suggested that the hipsters housed at The Hipster House read books such as *Jane Eyre*, *About A Boy*, *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, and for no explicable reason, several computer science textbooks identical in volume and edition.

On September third of this year Janope found herself sitting at the corner table of Hazel and Gretel sipping slowly a chai latte. It was the first time she attended the cafe by her lonesome, usually she was accompanied by her gentleman caller Rob or her two poet friends Kate and Alyson. She brought with her a brown, leather bound journal to jot down her mundane thoughts and, more importantly, camouflage herself. Casually she glanced around the room, sketching people and scrawling bits of conversations.

Two stick thin men in their early twenties were working; each wore black, skinny jeans and button down, plaid shirts. Each had shaggy hair, one blond and the other brunette. Each had colored plastic rings widening the holes in their earlobes. In Janope’s plainness she had never been able to see the value of torturing oneself in such ways. A similarly stick thin girl with short, multicolored hair chatted with the blond barista. Her body language and general tone suggested an attraction to the man. The two barista’s body language, however, suggested a reciprocated attraction was a little more than unlikely. At the small table in front of her sat a large, bearded man and his petite redheaded girlfriend, leaning over coffee mugs and blueberry muffins because a table length is an unbearable distance. A handful of college students with shredded wardrobes slid a couple of tables together and debated loudly, so everyone could hear their \$80,000 intelligence, literary theory. A thirty-year-old man, graying through anxiety, huddled over a

notebook, sketching architecture.

The most interesting person Janope noted, though, was a tall boy, a few years her senior, at the opposite corner. A boy who she suspected had also made his way to Hazel and Gretel with the desire to watch people. In one awkward moment when Janope decided to glance at Danny and Danny decided to return the favor, their eyes locked. Janope, for a moment, thought that perhaps if two people who enjoyed gardening and drinking chai tea, who watched late night television and scrapbooked, who called their mothers and ate tomato soup--if two people who were ordinary met, perhaps they could have an extraordinary life with one another. Simultaneously, Danny considered the same. But that was all that it was, a consideration, a moment of thought.

A pale blush warmed Janope's cheeks. She quickly slipped into her ordinary, brown jacket, tossed her coffeecup into the trashcan, and briskly walked back to her ordinary life. Her apartment was small but cozy, made of just four rooms--a living area, a kitchen, a bedroom, and a bathroom. She had an orange, striped tabby cat that she cleverly called "Tiger." Tiger was either a male cat or a female cat but Janope respected Tiger's privacy too well to ever determine one way or the other. Janope entered her living room and swung shut her front door. She placed her bag on top of a coffee table and sat down on a tan, hand-me-down couch. For a moment she sat, her hands clasped in a prayer position and brought to her light pink lips. Tiger rubbed its side against her leg as she reached towards the coffee table for her phone. She still had a landline. A multicolored, crocheted blanket covered the couch's back and she mindlessly picked at the yarn while listening to the phone ring and waiting for an answer.

"Hello?" Rob's voice was deep, a trait that Janope quite liked. It made her think that he could sing jazz or play trombone.

"Hey, Rob, it's me," she spoke sweetly.

"Janope! 'Ay, Dear! You want to roll by here, later? The guys are putting together a poker game and I could use a little luck from my lady," Rob's voice shifted. He was, professionally, a salesman and he often used that sort of tone with her. It was a trait she quite despised; it made her feel like she was being consistently sold their relationship.

"Oh, I, uh, no thanks," she muttered into the phone. The Guys. Poker games. Telemarketer voice. None of that sounded fun to her.

Poker, in Janope's opinion, was miraculously and simultaneously ordinary and un-ordinary. Everyone seemed to enjoy it without really ever enjoying it. There were the back-alley poker games with large men in leather jackets, the sort where big money could be won and every second played was a second of adrenalin, fear, and the desire to run. There were the late night games with nothing at stake, games with friends or family that were somewhat dull exchanges of cards and comforting familiarity. There were the casino games, insipid with high stakes and a shimmering, disguise of amusement. And then there were games like Poker with The Guys. A table full of irritable acquaintances labeled with "friendship." Boozed up, a self-inflicted lie that you enjoyed the game and you enjoyed the company. Sexist words being spat across the table, chips being gnawed on, a caloric ingestion not even enjoyed by participants, belches followed by the laughter of adults who had long since matured past the humor to be found there.

Reflecting on this, Janope considered that Rob, too, was miraculously and simultaneously ordinary and un-ordinary. His voice, his friends, his clothes, his job, his hair, his car, his interests. A presentation of excitement, education, and endeavor. She checked the time. It was the borderline between evening and night. She went to bed.

The decision to return to The Hipster House on the following morning was in no way abnormal. Many people decide to spend Saturday mornings casually sipping on hot, cinnamon flavored beverages. Everything about the coffee shop was ordinary. The shop smelt, as it always did, of coffee and vanilla scones, jasmine incense and nicotine. The hefty, happy, morning barista broadened a smile that bared his teeth beneath his beard as he handed Janope her beverage. The chai tasted as it always did. A large breasted woman fought with the manager, demanding that she be allowed to bring her small, wired-hair terrier in. Nothing was out of the usual

Except for Janope.

The night prior, she had twisted beneath her sheets; alone with her subconscious, she was unable to escape the eye contact that she had so readily evaded earlier that evening. The thought, "I bet he tastes like carrot soup" persistently pecked at her until she could only dream of gardening, cutting, boiling, creaming, and peeling carrots.

"Perhaps," she had thought upon waking up that morning, "he is ugly in daylight. And if I see him today, my repulsion could cure me of this ailment." And so

she returned to Hazel and Gretel.

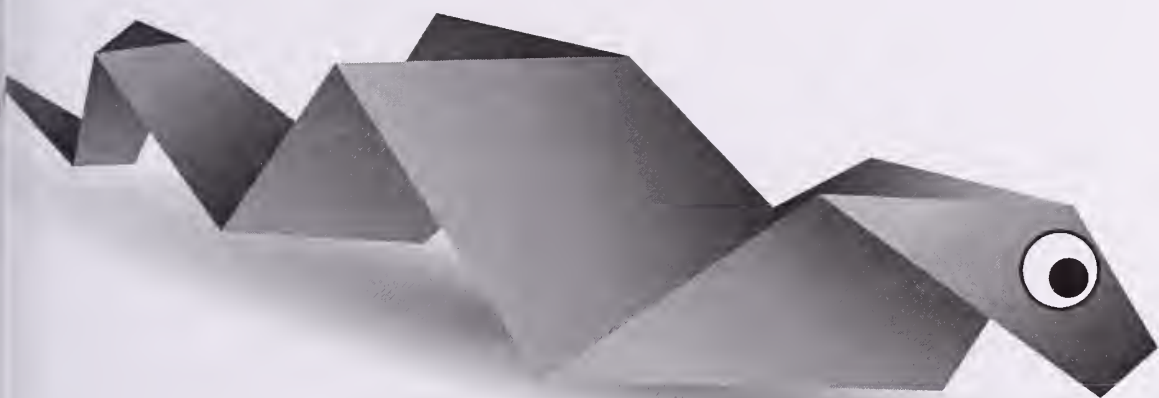
He wasn't there when she first arrived; she briefly considered that seeing him last night was just coincidence. But coincidence seemed too serendipitous for someone so plain. More likely, this was a place they both frequented. The fact that they had yet to have an encounter would, then, be more perplexing than the chance encounter that they experienced the night before.

What am I doing? She wondered suddenly. A brief glance at her table reinforced the concern she held for her actions. She had slowly torn a napkin into tiny shreds--the sort that, in her youth, she used to fill a guinea pig's cage--and flakes of paper coated her lap. Her drink, once deliciously warm, was spoiled through its decrease in temperature. She had taken only a couple of shaky sips. She was, at that particular moment, twisting a straw wrapper with great force and intention.

She resolved to leave Hazel and Gretel, and, with haste, she stood and made her way out of the coffee shop. Her thoughts preoccupied her and her anxiety distracted her. Without much consideration to the pathway before her, she stepped out of the Hipster House and promptly met a force which flung her backwards and onto the ground. Janope was in the process of scampering together her rather meager possessions which had managed to cover a surprisingly large surface area when she heard a distracted explanation, "I'm so sorry. I'm such a spazz. I was just, you know, lost in my thoughts or whatever. Not paying attention. Too little sleep, you understand, yes? Oh, God, I just stepped on your phone. I'm so sorry. I can, is it broken? I'll pay for it if it--oh."

Janope found herself standing directly before Danny. He towered over her and was somehow skinnier up close. His blond hair had been slicked back by his sweaty palms and he wore a beige cardigan over a plain white t-shirt. "Hi," he smiled. Janope said the same, she spoke quickly and provided little eye contact. She was wrong. He was even better looking in daylight.

Now, it would be impolite for me to detail the romance that followed. Furthermore, my words would be inept at describing the significance of late night scrabble games, cheesy holiday photographs, and trips to Cosco. Allow me to just assert that the life they built together was certainly ordinary, but it was a magical ordinary. Strikingly improbable in the realm of romance, but found in the hearts of two kind, enthusiastic, and simple individuals.



Essays

Tsunami

The year 2011 was one of the most disastrous years since the second world war in Japan. On March 11th, the biggest earthquake in Japanese history took place. 15,841 people died, and 3,490 people are still missing. This disaster also had a remarkable impact to me, even though I was in America when it happened. I had never seen such a big disaster in my life, but the main reason that affected me is the main shock of the tsunami and earthquake was Miyagi, which is my home state.

When the tragic disaster occurred, I was on spring break in Los Angeles, California with my friend. I was in a hotel room when I got to know the news from my brother speaking to me on Skype. It was 30 minutes after the earthquake happened. My brother was in Tokyo at a University. Every phone was down in Japan then; only the internet worked, so my brother could inform me. Earthquakes happen very often in Japan, therefore it is not too rare that it becomes news. I was not too worried at first. However, my brother said, it was not the biggest earthquake he'd ever seen, but he also said the main shock was in Miyagi which is about 350 kilometers away from Tokyo. My brother and I experienced a big earthquake about 5 years ago. Since he was in Tokyo, the earthquake was not as big as my state's, but he said the earthquake in Tokyo was one of the biggest ones in his life. I asked my brother if my family was fine or not, but he was not sure. Whenever he tried to call my mother, she did not answer. We were still trying not to freak out. Then I tried to talk to her because my phone was an international one, which means I could have called my mother by international line. I didn't hang up with my brother on Skype. Fortunately, I could talk to her. I was relieved, but at same time I freaked out. My mother generally can't calm down when something bad happens, so she didn't tell me the important details like where she was or who she was with. She just yelled and said something I couldn't understand, then the phone went dead. We could make sure my mother and my dog were safe at least for the moment. Our smiles were back; however, it only lasted for a short time. We saw the largest and craziest tsunami on live TV. I was able to watch Japanese TV in LA because the hotel was a Japanese hotel.

Of course, we had never seen a tsunami before, and we didn't know how much more powerful this tsunami was. However, a tsunami was destroying my city. I saw houses, cars and ships got carried away on the TV. The most shocking scene was

that the airplanes were carried away, quickly like a toy from the airport. The airport is not so far from my house, about 40 minutes driving. Honestly, I anticipated the worst case for just a moment. I called my mother again, but she didn't answer. I freaked out again, and at same time, I was so scared. I've never had this kind of feeling of fright in my life, and I found out people feel when they are scared of losing something really important. Also my father didn't answer the phone. He works as a doctor in another state called Tochigi. In his hospital, there was a big surgery. The electric systems including backup were all down. I heard the hospital was in chaos at the time. I called my American friends just to let them know about the tragedy. I don't know why I called so many people, but I needed something to make myself feel easy. I ended up watching TV all day. I heard everyone in my family was fine the next day from my aunt.

Ten months have passed since the tsunami. In America or any other country, nobody cares and almost forgot about the disaster, I also feel like that happened 5 years ago. I had an opportunity to go back to Japan last summer, then the cities were still destroyed and grief-stricken. Every TV channel didn't broadcast entertainment shows. People talked about the tsunami and victims day in and day out. One word became a trend word. It is "Fukinshin" which means imprudent, indiscreet, and shameless. When people talked about some happy events, they were accused because basically some people thought they should think about victims. It was too exaggerated and people were sensitive about the topic of the disaster.

I went back to Japan this winter again, and still people talked about the tsunami. I saw one TV show was about a famous baseball player. He graduated from the same high school as me. He lost his best friend. They are just 3 years younger than me. At the moment, I thought I must loose my friends. I made sure they were safe a month after the tsunami happened, but they were mostly my close friends from my junior high school. More then 10,000 people died in only my state. My state's population is about 2,000,000. So 0.5% of people died in my state in just a day. My high school had about 2500 students when I graduated. So statistically, 12 students died. I might have lost my friends. However, I didn't feel like trying to find out. I didn't want to know, and at the same time, I didn't know what I could do for them. I don't see them for 5 years, I can't even remember their last names anymore. I don't know how to face their death. I don't even know if I really feel sorry about them. I didn't take action soon enough. Even if I find out who died, I don't know what to say to them. If I go to visit a grave, then what does that mean? I

would be in front of the grave with my feeling of guilt. What I am supposed to think is what I am doing for whom. If going to a grave is for only me, I'm not supposed to go. If I really feel sorry for them, I should go. I thought a death was something more important and a bigger matter. Now, I am facing it, and I have only hollow and emptiness.

It is still not time to forget about victims. People need to take over the story over the generations, but it's not all we can do now. Actually, many people still are struggling. Many people came to my state to help people for a while, but nobody comes anymore. People are quick to forget about bad memories. Eventually, people will forget about the grief. People learn from mistakes, but they don't learn anything from a death.

They Are All Our Boys

A young man, he looks barely old enough to be out of high school, wearing green military field dress, carrying a viperous rifle, kneels down to pet a kitten, seemingly oblivious that she is in a combat zone. The soldier takes a moment from the rigors of war to appreciate the cat's soft fur and gentle, friendly disposition. In this moment captured in this photograph, the viewer is made aware that it is not nations, not faceless machines that fight wars; boys fight wars. Simultaneously, this photograph presents pro-war and anti-war stances, although this was not the photographer's intention. I imagine the photographer merely saw a rare juxtaposition of ruggedness and softness and took the opportunity to capture a compelling image.

Given the context of the American people's pre-occupation with patriotism and this country's history of ethnocentrism and American Exceptionalism, I am not surprised that the soldier in this photograph is commonly believed to be that of an American soldier fighting in Iraq. However, in truth, this is actually a soldier in the Israeli Defense Force stationed in Palestine. His uniform is not standard issue for any branch of the American military. The most telling give-away that this is not an American soldier is his boots; they are brown, not black.

However, the myth that the soldier is American persists in cyberspace. This image is easily found on several websites, complete with bountiful comments from anonymous viewers praising the heroism of our American soldiers fighting for freedom and sacrificing for the American ideal. One commenter on the weblog, Rattle and Hum made the dubious claim that this soldier was "...my sister-in-laws [sic] fiancé. He passed away during the war...One day she called us and to tell us this pictured surface [sic] in her email." (Iraq Soldier with Kitten) Another commenter on the same webpage claims this soldier is her boyfriend (Iraq Soldier with Kitten)!

These comments, and others like them, suggest that so long as the myth that this boy is an American soldier fighting for American interests is believed, he is an object of adoration and respect; he is a reminder that our boys are good and wholesome. Our boys share the same values we hold at home; and underneath all that armor and grit remains a person no different than us. Look! He is petting a cat after all! Only good people love animals.

However, on another webpage that correctly identifies this young man as a member of the IDF, the comments about the photograph take a less flattering light.

One commenter on the weblog Are You Human argued, "This is a distraction that is masking the horror of what has transpired in Gaza and for that reason somewhat sinister." (Israeli Soldiers Can Be Human) Despite this soldier's act of quiet humanity, for many people he remains a villain. This photograph is a reminder of a hated occupation of a disputed land.

In two different contexts this picture takes a pro-war stance when the soldier is seen as American and an anti-war stance when the soldier is seen as Israeli. The photograph appeals to mythos in both contexts. From the American context the soldier personifies what is perceived as good in the collective American discourse: compassion, decency, and goodness. When the Israeli context is utilized darker descriptors are used for its mythos: occupier, oppressive, sinister. This soldier is not an average boy doing his part for flag and country. Who cares if he pets a kitten in a bullet-chipped street? He probably is responsible for the rubble in which he and the cat are standing.

The appeal to *pathos* is in abundance as well. The image of a young man, a boy really, reaching down to pet a kitty in the street is meant to tug at the viewer's heartstrings. Is the cat an orphan, a stray, was her owner killed in the conflict? Does the soldier know? Was he responsible? Does he just need the comfort only a companion animal can provide? These are the questions I ask as I gaze at this picture. I think about my pets and what kind of hardships they would face if they were torn away from me in a time of war. I know I would worry if they could survive on the streets unable to understand why I went away. I hope someone, anyone would show any measure of affection for them in that sort of situation. Whether that cat is Iraqi or Palestinian, whether that soldier is American or Israeli. In the moment of the picture that cat is my pet and that soldier is my boy fighting over there. In the end they are all our boys.

Works Cited

Iraq Soldier with Kitten. 15 April 2007. 24 February 2010 <<http://lisbonlioness.wordpress.com/2007/04/15/7/>>.

Israeli Soldiers Can Be Human. 31 December 2008. 24 February 2011 <<http://www.are-you-human.com/israeli-soldiers-can-be-human>>.

Freedom Through Words

"In fact, up to then, I never had been so truly free in my life" (Malcolm X 43). Malcolm X, a black activist, fought for what he thought was right. He spoke up when blacks did not truly have the freedom to speak out. He found freedom in words to express his thoughts; he understood that he had an advantage over some because he could read. My generation takes the power of words for granted; they do not understand how the power of words can be a liberating factor.

Freedom is defined as having the ability to act or speak freely. If individuals of my generation's rights were taken away, the world would be in an uproar. One of the many advantages of living in America is the Freedom of Speech and people do not mind sharing their opinions and beliefs. So many people think that they deserve the freedoms that they have. Living in America, it is so easy to take things like that for granted, such as education. America's youth has become lazy when it comes to education. Not many students are willing to work extremely hard for what they want. The beauty of getting an education is not just getting there, but it is the experience of learning different things along the way. Students acquire so much knowledge throughout their time in the educational setting. However, one of the first things that a student will learn is the alphabet. The alphabet is the fundamental building blocks for one's education. These fundamental building blocks become words. These words allow one to intercommunicate.

For human beings, communication is vital for living. When individuals do not know how to communicate, things become misunderstood. If one does not understand the power of words, they have to express themselves physically. Understanding the power of words creates liberty within the expression of voice. Without the freedom of words, individuals are confined to express themselves with the small amount of vocabulary that they have. This vocabulary most likely houses a large amount of curse words because they are unable to find other words in their vocabulary to fit the situation. Having a limited vocabulary shows to one's peers that they are unable to compete in a debate. They are not able to get their point across and may become furious to the point that they use curse words. A person who has an expanded vocabulary will always be deemed smarter than one with a limited vocabulary.

One might ask why do people like tattoos and piercing. The simple answer being that they can physically express themselves. They can get different kinds

with in different places. Isn't that how words work too? The freedom of expression through words can be as simple as the pronunciation of a particular word in a detailed sentence. A person who is able to articulate his or her words knows and understands that the power of words has an advantage over the rest. They are able to keep one's attention and persuade others with their own ideas. Malcolm X had to go through many incidents to realize the power that words can have. Eventually, he came out victorious because of the knowledge that he acquired along the way, and it all started with words.

Works Cited

X, Malcolm. "Discovering the Power of Language." Language Awareness: Reading for College Writers. Ed. Paul Eschholz, Alfred Rosa, Virginia Clark. Boston, Massachusetts. Bedford/St. Martin's, 2009. 41-43. Print.

Rethinking the Foreign Aid Model: From Tents to the Marketplace

14 FEB 2012

In today's fast-paced world, the impoverished have witnessed a vast multitude of ephemeral causes aimed at improving general welfare. Such causes prove that good-intentions have a lifespan grossly shorter than that of basic human needs. What is needed is lasting change; a revolution to strip away the curse of externally glossy, but internally hopeless endeavors. Dramatically uplifting lives is the number one priority and large humanitarian aid projects' outcomes cannot afford to threaten this by creating childlike dependency from the recipient. The altruistically-minded contributor must prioritize the betterment of others as the essential core of foreign aid. The proper foreign aid model must be tailored to both the contributor and beneficiary of aid while remaining highly flexible. Such a model requires feedback and accountability which is best executed in a free-market environment.

New York University's Dr. William Easterly demonstrates the inefficiency of the most widely used and current foreign aid model. The largest vehicle for distribution is the government-to-government aid model where two governments collaborate in distributing goods to those in need; one is the contributor and the other acting as the beneficiary. Often, multiple governments form under a contributor umbrella organization such as the United Nations Millennium Development Program (UNDP)¹ with a distinct set of eight "goals" to be accomplished by 2015.² With such works as *Reinventing Foreign Aid*³, Dr. Easterly promotes, through the use of empirical data, a counter-cultural method that substitutes the government-to-government model with one based upon market incentives. Jacqueline Novogratz, author of *The Blue Sweater*⁴ and founder of Acumen Fund, supports a model resting upon similar attitudes and principles thus establishing itself upon free market economics. Here, governmental foreign aid is replaced by private-sector investments.

UNDP is a massive undertaking with dramatic, idealist, and therefore unattainable goals. Dr. Easterly candidly states that "The missing elements in big plans, it can never be stressed enough, are feedback and accountability."⁵ He

argues that feedback must come from aid recipients. This feedback answers questions such as whether the aid received is relevant or beneficial to the need. The Salvation Army presents a dramatic example of which aid distribution disrupted markets of the intended recipients. In *T-Shirt Travels*, filmmaker Shantha Bloeman discusses how clothes donated to the Salvation Army in America were resold in Zambia. The price of the clothes was lower than the domestic market. In turn, this populated the Zambian unemployment line after having destroyed Zambia's textile industry.⁶ The donating of used clothes may have originated as an altruistic and tangible means of contributing but has resulted in devastating consequences directly affecting unemployment rates and even gross domestic product⁷ (selling used clothes does not offer the same profits as other occupations might).

This real-life scenario demonstrates a lowering of price and increasing of quantity. Hypothetically state, quantity of clothing units within Zambia naturally sat at 10 units before the Salvation Army's selling of donated clothes. Ten units of clothing was the market's equilibrium due to both supply availability and demand of population. Then, external supply sources at a lower price intrude upon the established market. Because the external unit's price undercuts the market, the price of clothing drops. This destroys the internal supply source market which sold at the original equilibrium and cannot compete with the lower prices. External supply sources may be sold lower because they do not account for multiple factors, including manufacturing costs and material costs such as raw cotton. The law of demand states: "Quantity demanded rises as price falls, other things constant."⁸ The lower price of external supply sources pushes demand higher (assuming clothing is a necessity), as buyers will naturally prefer the drop in unit price. Taking the law of demand into account finishes what little is left of the internal supply source if quantity demanded is quantity of a lower price. Because of the increased quantity of external supply sources, domestic clothing manufacturing goes out of business due to demand for clothing being shifted to a new and lower price.

Secondly, Dr. Easterly promotes accountability of aid contributors. In theory, this decreases corruption and increases efficiency of distribution. The monetary amount of foreign aid distributed is astronomical to a point of being measured in GDP percentages. Therefore, a heightened level of transparency in reporting is mandatory. That is, reported results ought to reflect real results. Such reports are often skewed to depict the desired end goal instead of the actual results. Dr. Easterly states that

...if the UN Millennium Project report about escaping the well-governed poverty trap had looked in its own country studies, it would have found interesting clues to this result, such as the following vignette on Cambodian schoolteachers: 'Many supplement their income by soliciting bribes from students, including the sale of examination questions and answers....the end result is a high dropout rate.'⁹

The Millennium Development Goals Report for 2011 clearly demonstrates a hubristic nature by proponents of the failed government-to-government model. The report suggests a top-down approach which disconnects government leaders from recipients of aid. The goals are emotional appeals that generalize and leave little room for flexibility. Such odd goals might leave one more confused than inspired.

Take, for instance, "Goal 2". Goal 2's target result is to "Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling."¹⁰ This goal would require the cooperation of a well-funded government to prioritize primary education on its budget. Fortunately, the budget would most likely be supplemented by the U.N. who in turn is largely funded by American tax-payers.¹¹ Secondly, UNDP Goal 2 neither suggests a lack of child labor laws or cultural attitudes concerning female pupils. Only a centralized world government could hope to codify and implement child labor laws "everywhere." However, the inclusion of such laws "everywhere" would create conflict at the family level as many children support their family's income. Financing nourishment ought to come before a "full course" of schooling. Goal 2's inability to account for cultural attitudes will indefinitely leave Goal 2 unmet. It is obvious that UNDP's goals are, while good-intentioned, poorly thought out.

Foreign aid must re-orient itself from altruistic contributions that the government-to-government model attempts to set forth to a more realistic approach. This approach lacks immediate results that Millennium Goals spew forth. Instead, a firm approach advocating a business model is suggested.

Where Dr. Easterly's *Reinventing Foreign Aid* captures why the current government-to-government system needs to change, Jacqueline Novogratz's *The Blue Sweater* captures how it can change through free-market use. It has been said that the use of Austrian economic principles are reliable within the realm of long-term foreign aid but not crises dictating immediate need. Such crises include drought, famine, or genocide, where elementary mechanisms of contribution should

instead be exercised (immediate monetary donations). All can agree there can be no justification for withholding from one having suffered from such crises such as the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami. However, Easterly states the government-to-government model cannot handle immediate crises.

Another interesting example of this emphasis on observability is that a natural disaster heavily covered by the news media gets much more aid than a similar disaster less well covered. Earthquakes are better covered than famines, so a famine would have to have 40,000 times as many deaths as an earthquake to get equivalent news coverage and aid.¹²

Long-term foreign aid, which outside of immediate crises, encompasses all other aid, justifies patience with higher results over immediate poor results. At *prima facie*,¹³ this might seem rather cruel to the government-to-government model protagonist or one having been introduced to no alternative. Nancy Birdsall (President, Center for Global Development) states in *Seven Deadly Sins: Reflections on Donor Failure* that

In general, however, impatience for results leads to reluctance to invest over the long term (and outside the confines of donor-sponsored programs and projects) in local capacity to do budgeting, personnel management, auditing, accounting, and other nuts-and-bolts functions-which require and reinforce institutions but do not yield obvious immediate results.¹⁴

Novogratz implements an investment model centered around patient capital. Patient capital applies principles of micro-financing to start-up businesses. Contributors are known as “investors” and input financial aid into everything from drip-irrigation farms to water purification tanks. A similar organization with a narrower task is Heifer International where contributors “buy” animals for recipients. The recipient may use the animal to sell milk, if the animal is a goat or cow, or bring produce to other markets, if the animal pulls a cart.^{15, 16}

Novogratz’s early work in Kigali, Rwanda demonstrates the importance of providing employment opportunities. She started with a bakery “project” with a charitable budget of \$650 a month where each woman made \$0.50 a day.¹⁷ By

turning the charitable project into a legitimate business operation, within 8 months, each woman was "earning \$2 a day...much more than most earned in Kigali; and in some weeks, they earned more than \$3."¹⁸ Contributors might scoff at \$2 per day income (assuming the international poverty line in 1988 to be near \$1 per day). However, the dollar's purchasing power is often much higher in developing nations than in America. To not consider a 2 to 3 times daily income gain as a nascent venture would demonstrate the contributor's damaging thought pattern that the contributor knows what is best instead of working with individuals on the ground.

Fair Trade Coffee is one such western company that attempts to apply a top-down approach. Fair Trade pays coffee bean farmers at "fair" prices, or prices supposedly at a competitive rate. This creates a limited competitive environment - or a monopoly. Any farmer freely choosing not to enter into a contract with Fair Trade Coffee can no longer compete. This is because richer farmers will eventually crowd out poorer farmers due to the fact rich farmers can buy more land and employ lower wage earners. However, increased profits of Fair Trade farmers are illusionary. A dramatic spike in coffee bean farmer incomes will create inflation as it demonstrates an unnatural amount of money quickly dumped into the aggregate marketplace.

Contrasting the bakery business and Fair Trade Coffee demonstrates that while both projects created financial gains, the former had few, if any, negative economic side effects. Any negative results, whether they be sustained/continual or end-result, will produce a negative economic footprint that ripples into other markets.

The bakery business was profitable because a spirit of free enterprise was applied. Humanity is intrinsically designed to work, not to sit and seek handouts. This holds true not just for citizens of the first-world but to all people. The bakery expanded without government intervention coming from the top down. Instead, results came from the bottom up. People on the ground were willing to get their hands dirty and work. The current foreign aid model is built upon a foundation of fickle donors and fickle governments. In the ensuing power struggle, the impoverished have been deprioritized. Feedback coming from the bottom up and accountability for both parties is nowhere to stabilize this wobbly foundation that the government-to-government foreign aid model attempts to rest upon. Micro-financing and the creation of private business ventures are the answer in shifting impoverished persons from tent encampments and absolute poverty to the local, regional, and global marketplace. This has proven to create a level of economic

independence among participants that garners the animosity of many including corrupt governments and those holding onto archaic misogynistic views. The impoverished may seek handouts that keep them in static poverty but this is not naturally a result of free choice. Instead, the human spirit will strive to break out, to take business risks, and to ultimately thrive in and contribute to today's modern world. As citizens of the western world, it is of the greatest necessity to cultivate and support one such as this.

¹ United Nations Development Programme. Retrieved January 29, 2012 from <http://www.beta.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/mdgoverview.html>.

² United Nations - Millennium Development Goals. Retrieved January 27, 2012 from <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>.

³ Easterly, William. (2008). *Reinventing Foreign Aid*. Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

⁴ Novogratz, Jacqueline. (2009). *The Blue Sweater: Bridging the Gap between Rich and Poor in an Interconnected World*. Rodale.

⁵ Easterly, William. Ibid. Page 13.

⁶ PBS Independent Lens. (2001). *T-Shirt Travels - The Film*. Retrieved January 29, 2012 from <http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/tshirttravels/film.html>.

⁷ Gross Domestic Product formula is " $Y = C + I + E + G$ where $Y = \text{GDP}$, $C = \text{Consumer Spending}$, $I = \text{Investment made by industry}$, $E = \text{Excess of Exports over Imports}$, $G = \text{Government Spending}$." *Calculating GDP*. Retrieved

⁸ Colander, David C. (2010). *Macroeconomics*. Pg. 84. McGraw-Hill Irwin.

⁹ Easterly, William. Ibid. Page 16.

¹⁰ United Nations. (2011). *The Millennium Development Goals: Report 2011*. Page 16.

¹¹ Schaefer, Brett. (2010). *U.S. Funding of the United Nations Reaches All-Time High*. The Heritage Foundation. Retrieved January 29, 2012 from <http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2010/08/us-funding-of-the-united-nations-reaches-all-time-high>.

¹² Easterly, William. Ibid. Page 31.

¹³ Prima facie – at first view : on the first appearance. M-W.com. Retrieved February 16, 2012 from <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/prima%20facie>.

¹⁴ Easterly, William. Ibid. Page 518.

¹⁵ Heifer International. Retrieved January 30, 2012 from <http://www.heifer.org/inside/our-history>.

¹⁶ See also KIVA at <http://www.kiva.org/>.

¹⁷ Novogratz, Jacqueline. Ibid. Page 76.

¹⁸ Novogratz, Jacqueline. Ibid. Page 87.

Mama Leone, A Portrait

Maria Leone was one of the strongest females I've had the opportunity to meet. Still to this day, I consider her my role model in life because of her strength. To some she was known as Maria, Joe's wife, Mrs. Leone, and Mama Leone, but to me, she was grandma. She happened to be the only grandmother I had the chance to meet, since my paternal grandmother passed away a short time after my birth. I only experienced the last twelve years of her life, but I was grateful for every moment I had with her.

I spent every Saturday with my grandmother since I was eight days old. She lived in Junction City, KS, an hour drive from my house in Topeka. It was a drive my mother and often my father would make every Saturday. We would leave early in the morning and wouldn't come home until the moon came out. Everyone gathered at my grandparents' house on the weekends. For twenty years on every Sunday, the Italian population of the town would gather at the end of Vine Street where my grandmother would cook her famous Italian meals, which gave her the name of Mama Leone.

I remember every Saturday walking in and seeing my grandmother in her chair. It was the first thing anyone would see when you walked into her home, besides the pictures of Jesus and JFK. Her chair was symbolic of her role in the family; she was the matriarch, the one that held everything together. I thought of her chair as a throne, no one would dare sit in it.

She was born and raised in a poor small town in Italy. The town was so small, a person couldn't even find it on a map without squinting. Her father raised her since her mother, Josephine, passed away when she was nine years old. She once told me that losing her mother was the first hardship she had ever experienced. To me, that was the first chance she was given to show her strength.

Another instance of her strength that I feel, truly defined her, as an individual was when she immigrated to America. Her father contracted her for marriage to a young Italian man she had never met before. The contract stated that she would immigrate to America and marry Joseph Leone with no questions of a divorce, of course bearing children within the marriage. Even though she left her country, she always kept her heritage strong and alive through her children and grandchildren.

In 1947, my grandmother found her inner strength. She sailed to America, saying goodbye to her family she would never see again; to marry a stranger. After

fourteen days on a ship, she arrived in New York, immediately walking down the aisle of a local Catholic Church, not knowing any English. She cried for three years after arriving, only realizing that America was now her home, forever missing Italy and the life she once had there. My grandparents were married for fifty-three years only having death separating them.

Within those fifty-three years, my grandmother raised seven children, all females. She ran her home with an iron fist, but with gratitude, grace and religion. Raising seven girls, she always knew how to make things right and was a genuine peacemaker. She was the brains behind my grandfather's business deals and worked hard everyday as a seamstress, until her health did not permit her to work any longer.

The one thing that always made me laugh about my grandma was her love-hate relationship with animals. I would hear stories of how the house was full of animals or what she would do to the animals that came around Vine Street. One story included my aunts having a nanny goat. My grandmother would let the nanny goat walk some of my aunts to school. By the end of the day, the goat was waiting outside the Catholic school doors, ready to walk them back home to my grandma. Once, my grandparents had baby chickens, and my grandmother did not want to keep them. She struggled to find a home for these poor chickens and kept them in the cellar for the time being. Her solution was to leave the cellar door open and much to her relief one by one they disappeared.

Another instance occurred when my youngest aunt's teacher gave her mice to bring home, three of them. Much to my grandmother's dismay, my aunt had them in a cage. As soon as my aunt went to sleep, my grandmother took the mice into the bathroom. My mother being the ornery out of the bunch, peeped through the keyhole of the bathroom door. She witnessed my grandmother drop the mice in the toilet, one by one. When my aunt asked for her mice, my grandmother simply told her they fell asleep forever. The only animal my grandmother put up with was my mother's cat. She had it for nine years and after several babies, my grandmother still kept it. When the cat went missing and came back with a raw paw, my grandma helped my mother nurse it back to good health. My mother remembers that instance being an example of how my grandmother taught her to be maternal.

The life my grandmother lived made her a strong, beautiful, and faithful person. She was an obedient wife and caring mother. She is someone I will always look up too. Losing her was the hardest thing I've experienced but I have treasure the fact that I was given the chance to have her as my grandmother.

Between the Moon and the Sea: The Struggle for Defining Self in *Bless Me, Ultima*

'What do you carry, dark child,
mingled with your blood?'

'Sir, I carry
salt-waters of the sea.' From "The Ballad of the Salt-Water"(Lorca)

The moon lays a long horn,
of light, on the sea. From "From Moon Songs"(Lorca)

According to the Existentialist philosopher, Jean-Paul Sartre, the actions a person will take in life are what will define the person; and if a person is unwilling or unable to define one's self, others will quickly define and label the person on their own terms (Onof). In the novel, *Bless Me, Ultima*, Antonio Marez struggles from the cultural tug-of-war contested between his mother and father, and his understanding of religion through his actions and inactions, he becomes defined in ways as Sartre describes.

Bless Me, Ultima fits into the *bildungsroman* genre of fiction; it is a genre that follows a character's psychological and ethical education (Bildungsroman). Tony's personal growth and his struggle with discovering how to define himself is assisted with Ultima's tutelage. From birth, his parents and their respective families insisted upon Tony the destinies they wanted him to have. His mother, née Luna, comes from a family of farmers and priests. The Lunas are quiet introspective people, not prone towards *wanderlust*; rather, they are happy in their sessility. The ancestors of Tony's father, the Marez's, were originally *conquistadors* and became *vaqueros*. They are wild and boisterous people, always longing for the freedom only the *llanos* can grant to them. Remaining in one place for too long stifles the Marez spirit. Tony's mother wishes him to grow up and become a priest to the Luna's or a farmer. His father wants him to have the same dreams of ambulatory independence

all Marez's have. Because of this pull between his parents for his identity and his desire to honor both parents' hopes for him, Tony is yet unable to define for himself who he is.

A number of events, in *Bless Me, Ultima*, occur that eventually lead to Tony's ability to define himself. The night before Ultima comes to live with his family, Tony dreams about his birth. Tony's dreams often have a premonitory quality. In his dream, after Ultima delivers Tony, uncles from both his mother's and father's families come into the room. They each proclaim proudly Tony's future reflecting each family's values. The uncles start arguing, when Ultima rises up and delivers the edict that will help define Tony for himself, "Cease! She cried and the men were quiet. I pulled this baby into the light of life, so I will bury the afterbirth and the cord that once linked him to eternity. Only I will know his destiny" (Anaya 6). Ultima never told anyone, not even Tony, what she knew of his destiny; she made it possible for Tony to figure for himself who he was to be.

Tony initially gravitates to his mother's longing for him to join the priesthood. Tony is a Catholic with childlike devotion to and understanding of his faith. However two incidents take place that lay doubt onto what Tony believes about religion. The first happened at the end of his first year of school. Samuel, a friend he had made earlier in the year tells him the story of the golden carp. Later in the summer, Cico comes across Tony as he is fishing (but not for carp) and elaborates on the tale of the golden carp Samuel told him. "Do you believe the golden carp is a god?" Cico asks. Tony responds by telling him that he can only believe in God. Despite this, Cico takes Tony to see the golden carp. "Behold the golden carp, Lord of the waters—" Cico proclaims (Anaya 79-81, 106-113). The story of the golden carp is Tony's first exposure to a belief other than the Catholic faith he was brought up in. The golden carp was a god he could see; the God he knew was only an abstract. Earlier he had questioned why the Church could not cure his uncle of the curse Tenorio's daughters had put on him, yet he could see the golden carp actively protect the other carp that swam in its school.

The second incident where his faith was shaken took place immediately before and after his first confession and communion. All the boys in the gang Tony hung with knew his mother intended him to become a priest when he grew up. In the playful and cruel way children can sometimes act, the gang made him into a parody of a priest and insisted they hear their sins and bestow upon them their atonement. They attempted to make Florence, a boy whose parents had died and whose sisters had become prostitutes, make his confession to Tony, although they

Jakobb Baldwin
Chad Montuori

knew he denied God's existence. Tony, already uneasy about this game, refused. His empathy for Florence was stronger than his desire to practice as a priest any longer. After the boys harangued and beat Tony, Florence apologetically said to Tony, "You could never be their priest" (Anaya 208-215).

After his first communion, Tony expected to finally feel a unity with God, but he did not. The serenity and warmth he expected never came. Tony compared the lack of unity with God to the positive feelings he got when he was near the golden carp. All the questions he had for God remained unanswered (Anaya 221). Tony faced an existential crisis. God could not provide the answers and guidance he wanted; he would have to answer the questions for himself, define his morality and identity for himself.

Tony's struggle with the duality of who he was and his existential crisis because of it reconciled in an unexpected way, but one that mirrored what began his struggle—in dreams, and again Ultima was at the center of them. "Cease... without the waters of the moon to replenish the oceans there would be no oceans. And the same salt waters of the oceans are drawn by the sun to the heavens, and in turn become again the waters of the moon... The waters are one, Antonio. I looked into her bright clear eyes and understood her truth" (Anaya 121). Tony knew now that he was not either Luna or Marez, but that he was both and still of himself. The duality of his heritage was now resolved. His final dream resolved his struggle with faith. In his dream he saw Catholic priests desecrate the altar, Cico murder the golden carp, Tenorio slay Ultima's owl familiar. He demands God tell him why He has taken away everything he has believed in. God does not answer. After waking from his dream, Ultima consoled Tony. Tony was now free to decide for himself what he believed (Anaya 244).

Not long after, Tenorio did manage to kill Ultima. The one person who knew Tony's true destiny took that knowledge to her grave. But Tony's struggle with the duality of his existence was finally resolved, his existential crisis over. One of the characteristics of a *bilungroman*, is that the character, after his psychological and moral education is complete is allowed to have a happy ending. Although Tenorio managed to end Ultima when he slew her owl familiar, Tony was allowed a bittersweet ending to his tale. He took it upon himself—he made the choice—to put to rest in the earth of the *llanos* Ultima's owl, symbolically laying to rest his moral and psychological mentor.

Bibliography

Anaya, Rudolfo. Bless Me, ultima. New York : Grand Central Publishing, 1972.

Bildungsroman. 2011. 8 July 2011

<<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/65244/bildungsroman>>.

Lorca, Garcia. Garcia Lorca, Another Twenty Poems. Ed. A.S. Kline. 2007. 8 July 2011 <http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Spanish/NewMoreLorca.htm#_Toc494856152>.

Onof, Christian J. Sartre's Existentialism. 17 January 2010. 8 July 2011
<<http://www.iep.utm.edu/sartre-ex/>>.

Play



An Issue of Vanity

Setting: A white, victorian vanity is placed stage right, a matching stool is placed before it. the tabletop is cluttered but organized, holding brass makeup tins, brushes, canisters of hair product, and a collection of polishes. The vanity houses at least three drawers. Beside the dressing table is a rack holding a number of exquisite garments and a black, big-brimmed felt hat. Upstage-center is a cranberry colored room divider. On one end hangs a silk robe, on the other hangs a feathered boa. Downstage-center is a white table of like fashion displaying large and showy jewelry. Stage left houses a similar white, victorian vanity and stool. This one holds a large makeup container, a mannequin's head with an outlandish wig, and a stack of fashion magazines. The rack beside it holds a few articles of clothing but mainly displays several intricate brassieres. From behind the room divider on the left side we see a dresser, several articles of clothing spilling out.

Characters

Eleanor: a proper woman in her early thirties, fuller in bust and body.

Lady Chichi Dupaul: a man in his late twenties, slight build, dressed in drag

Butler: an attractive man in his mid-twenties

James: an average looking man in his late forties, well off with familial prestige.

Act 1

[Curtain raises to reveal Lady Chichi Dupaul sitting at the vanity stage left. She wears a seventies style silk robe. Her hair is short and slicked back. She cautiously applies false eyelashes--long and jewel studded. Eleanor enters stage left. Eleanor wears a short, pink night gown and ladylike slippers; her hair is still in rollers. She crosses the room and takes a seat at the vanity stage right.]

Eleanor

Good morning Lady Chi, you're here early.

Chichi

Not early enough it seems.

Eleanor

How was the pageant last night?

Chichi

Fine, I suppose. [*Chichi shifts in her seat to face in Eleanor's direction,*] I placed third. Can you believe that darling? Third. I think I'm getting old.

Eleanor

Heavens Chichi, if you're getting old then I'm ancient. And that certainly can't be [*Eleanor begins removing the curlers from her hair. In the process she turns to face Lady Chichi Dupaul*] You know who's old?

All Together

James.

[*Chichi begins howling with laughter.*]

Eleanor

It's true. I'm a spritely young thang in comparison. It might be part of the reason I'm interested. People see us together and think, "How does a geezer like that get a pretty girl like her?"

Chichi

And the rest of your reason is... well a million reasons locked away in the bank.

Eleanor

Eight million, ninety-two thousand, nine-hundred and eighty-three, dear. And that's not including the bit in the market. Or even considering all of his properties.

[*Once again Chichi howls with laughter.*

Eleanor smiles proudly, turns to face the mirror, and finishes her hair.]

Eleanor

Chich, doll, how are things panning out with Howard?

[*Eleanor leans toward the mirror seductively and powders her face*]

Chichi

[Chichi waits a moment to respond. She begins applying false nails.]

Well, they've hit a standstill. Things were going wonderful, Eleanor, really wonderful. I was singing at his club three nights a week. And keeping him company at least four. But then Howard met *[with a tinge of disgust.]* Kitty Claw.

Eleanor

[Shocked] Kitty Claw? I thought Howard liked his girls to have class. Right proper queens.

Chichi

Oh, he does. Exceptions are made, though. And Kitty is certainly an exception. New talent, promising, *[Resentfully,]* barely out of high school.

Eleanor

No!

Chichi

[Chichi nods in response and continues.] So as of late Kitty's been heading. I think the most I can hope for here is to mother the poor dear. Keep her out of trouble, make sure Howard doesn't use her up like he did Anita.

[Some time passes. Chichi begins polishing her nail., Eleanor curls her lashes. Butler enters carrying a tray of tea.]

Butler

[Nods at Eleanor,] Ma'am. *[Nods at Chichi,]* Miss Dupaul.

Eleanor

"Ma'am"? Really? I'm not my mother!

Butler

Sorry, miss, you are looking lovely this night.

Eleanor

Well, [*Gleaming.*] that's certainly better.

[Butler places one saucer and cup on Chichi's vanity, the other on Eleanor's. He bows stiffly at the waist and exits. Eleanor takes a sip of her tea, stands, and walks over to the rack. She grabs a dress and disappears behind the divider.]

Chichi

Eleanor, your butler is positively [*Pauses then laughs.*], well, rugged.

Eleanor

[Eleanor's nightgown is tossed over the divider.] Isn't he just? It's a shame he's just got looks.

Chichi

Seems nice, though.

Eleanor

Oh he is. *[Eleanor peaks out from behind the divider and repeats herself with a suggestive emphasis]* Oh, he is.

Chichi

[Laughs.] Oh dear, you're so *[Exaggerated,]* naughty.

[Eleanor emerges from behind the divider wearing a sleek, black dress with a pair of satin heels.]

Eleanor

[Extravagantly.] How do I look?

Chichi

Lovely. Saucy. Darling. Minx. Looking at you I wish I was a man.

[Eleanor giggles and Chichi laughs flamboyantly.]

Eleanor

[Eleanor returns to her vanity, sits and applies bright red lipstick.]
James is taking me out tonight. *[For elusive emphasis.]* Maison de garçon.

Chichi

Ooh. So, dear, is tonight the night?

Eleanor

Is tonight what night?

[Chichi walks to the jewelry table and begins inspecting the pieces.]

Chichi

What night?! The night? *[As she speaks Chichi shoots Eleanor meaningful glances.]*

Eleanor

Chichi, dear, he's not the butler or the pool boy--

Chichi

[Interrupting.] The pool boy! Eleanor, I had no idea.

Eleanor

No, not the pool boy. You know what I mean, though, this is *James*. He needs to use a bit of his eight million, ninety-two thousand, nine-hundred and eighty-three reasons to buy *this* cow.

Chichi

[Settles on a gaudy gold necklace and several matching bracelets.] Of course!
[Chichi makes her way back to her vanity where she applies a bright, violet eyeshadow.] You know, I think that was my problem with Howard. He got his milk free. And now he's got his eyes set on some poor calf.

Eleanor

I'm telling you, Chich, play it smart enough and you'll open every show you want. And still get to wear those pricey stilettos you like when you get tired of the limelight.

[A few moments elapse where they get ready in silence. At one point Eleanor disappears behind the divider again and reemerges wearing a short, sequenced dress. Her shoes at this point must be noticeably different than they had been.]

Eleanor

Chichi, do you ever get tired of all of this?

Chichi

All of what?

Eleanor

Well, you know. The show, I guess.

Chichi

The show? Hell no. Maybe the stuffy pre-show. The tweezing and painting and--no--that moment, center stage singing them audience boys all in love with you? Makes it worth it. Why? Do you get tired of the show?

Eleanor

No, no. Well, I mean, sometimes I'll see a girl when I'm out. And she'll be a hundred pounds too heavy, hair fried frizzy, and a bucktooth. And then I think, "She probably has just given up." And then for a moment, just I moment, I--

*[Eleanor hushes when she hears a noise from the hallway.
The Butler enters, removes their dishes, and exits.]*

Chichi

Lady Eleanor and the butler. Now, that's a story I'd read.

Eleanor

[Shocked/offended tone.] Lady Dupaul! *[Pause.]* Don't pretend you read.

Chichi

[Laughs flamboyantly in response][Wait a moment]

You know I'm going to have to drive twenty minutes out to tonight's discotheque?

Eleanor

[For a moment Eleanor appears preoccupied with her reflection. Suddenly she turns to face Chichi.] Twenty minutes! But Howard's place is just down the street!

Chichi

I know, I know. But I'm thinking tonight Howard should miss me. And maybe I should check out this place downtown, The Fox Theatre. Fushia left Howard's and has gone Fox permanently.

Eleanor

I suppose you said Howard isn't headlining you anymore. But twenty minutes! You'll get all dolled up and need a serious amount of refreshing as soon as you arrive!

Chichi

I know! And what will I wear?

Eleanor

God, you might be all wrinkles by the time you get there!

[Both shudder at the thought. Simultaneously they rush to their clothes racks. Moments pass with Chichi holding ensembles up to herself and then throwing them in a pile. At one point she makes her way to the dresser and pulls stuff out. Likewise, Eleanor holds dresses out towards Chichi, all of which get nixed. Finally, Chichi finds something she likes and disappears behind the divider.]

Chichi

[After a moment.] El, hon? Can you grab my ta-tas for me? They're in the bottom drawer of my vanity. Oh, and toss me the amaranth brassiere, will you?

[Eleanor retrieves both requested items and passes them to her friend over the divider. She moves across the stage to the jewelry table. She puts on and takes off a number of pieces before Chichi reemerges wearing an extravagant dress.]

Well? How do I look?

Eleanor

Saucy. Darling. Minx. Fabulous. You've got me wishing I was a man.

[Both laugh. Chichi inspects herself in a mirror and appears discontent. She removes padding from the dress's bust, opens her vanity's bottom drawer, tosses them in, and removes a larger pair. She busies herself stuffing her chest.]

Chichi

[Despairingly] They don't ever look right. You're so lucky, you don't even know. I have double the work and never so good an end result. It's, it's, it's depressing. Soul-sucking. I just, I fucking want to throw in the towel sometimes.

[Chichi finishes her rant in dry sobs and sinks to the floor Eleanor shifts uneasily at this sudden outburst]

Chichi

[Laughs ironically]. You know, I can't even cry anymore? Not real tears. Because when you cry.

Together

You have to start over.

Eleanor

Chich, doll, you're the best friend I've got. Hell, half the time you're the only friend I got. And because I love you so, I'm going to be blunt for a moment. Most the ladies in this town can't hold a candle to you. A couple months back I started thinking James was sneaking around. You know men, right, always sneaking about. So I follow him one night. Sure enough, he meets up with this young thing, red hair and white trash. Not a girl he could properly marry. Large assets, though, and I remember looking at her thinking, "God, doesn't he have any taste?" You are more womanly, in behavior as well as appearance, than this monstrosity.

Chichi

[Thinks a moment, smiles sympathetically and stands] Nice of you to say. *[After a moment]*. So James is fiddling about?

Eleanor

He's practically a violinist.

[Chichi smiles with understanding. Both go back to preparing. More make up is applied, Eleanor sets her hair with spray.]

Chichi

Goodness, it's getting late.

Eleanor

Yes, James should be here any moment now.

Chichi

Do you remember being young and idealistic? Remember dreams of marrying for love? If my seventeen year-old self could see me now, *[Chichi allows her voice to trail off.]*

Eleanor

Mm. I know.

[Chichi, sitting at her vanity, prepares to situate her wig. The butler emerges.]

Butler

Sir James Tyrone here for Miss Eleanor.

[The butler turns stiffly and exits. James enters with a quick pace. He makes his way to Eleanor and kisses her.]

James

Eleanor. Richard.

Chichi

[Offended.] It is Lady Chichi Dupaul.

James

Not according to your birth certificate. Or your mother. [*With an air of cruelty in his voice.*]

Chichi

[*In an angry and yet controlled voice.*] Neither my birth certificate nor my mother acknowledge my true being. Now if you don't mind, call me Lady Chichi Dupaul.

James

Hm. I mind.

Eleanor

James. Behave.

James

[*Impatiently.*] Eleanor, we should be on our way. [*Looks her over quickly.*] Is that what you're wearing? [*Eleanor flashes a wide-eyed expression of confusion and James sighs.*] It'll do. Let's be on our way.

[*Eleanor nods apologetically, crosses the room to Chichi and kisses both her cheeks*]

Eleanor

Good luck tonight.

Chichi

To you too.

[*They hold position for a moment before the curtain falls and scene ends.*]

Index

Alderman, Timothy	48
Baldwin, Jakobbb.....	9, 44, 56
Black, Olivia.....	46
Connelly, Diana.....	17
Criss, Shawnalee.....	54
Dang, Kevin.....	11
Dobbins, Eve.....	15
Elliot, Jennifer	12
Henderson, Marcus	3, 21
Henderson, Michelle.....	4, 5, 6, 7, 8
High, Katrina.....	26, 34, 63
Ishihaman, Yohel	41
Koehler, Matthew.....	10
Mahoney, Jonathan	28
Montuori, Chad	56
Roach, Dakota	22

